

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ON LYDIA

REF: A. ATHENS 3284; B. NAIROBI 6222; C. NAIROBI 6312
(ALL NOTAL)

1. ENDORSE POINTS MADE BY ATHENS IN PARA 2 REFTEL A TO
MR. GEORGIADIS, OWNER OF LYDIA. ATHENS SHOULD CONVEY TO
HIM DEPT'S APPRECIATION FOR HIS AFFIRMATION IN PARA 4 THAT
HIS VESSELS WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO CONTINUE TO OFFER ASSIS-
TANCE TO BOAT REFUGEES. ATHENS SHOULD ALSO EXPRESS APPRE-
CIATION TO GOG FOR ACCEPTING REFUGEES FOR PROCESSING AT
LAVRION.

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2. SINCE THIS WAS GREEK SHIP, DEPT DOES NOT PLAN PUBLICLY
TO COMMEND CREW AND OWNER FOR CARRYING OUT HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSIBILITIES.

3. OTTAWA SHOULD EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO HOST GOVERNMENT
FOR ACCEPTING 25 REFUGEES FROM LYDIA. ITS TIMELY ACTION,

AT A MOMENT WHEN THERE ARE CONSTRAINTS ON USG ABILITY TO ASSIST IN SUCH CASES AS LYDIA BECAUS; CURRENT US PAROLE PROGRAMS FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEES CONSTRUCTIVELY FILLED, HAVE HELPED SHORE UP PRACTICE OF RESCUE AT SEA OF REFUGEE CRAFT IN DISTRESS. POST SHOULD ALSO EXPLAIN THAT U.S. WILL CONSIDER REMAINING 17 FOR CONDITIONAL ENTRY WHEN THEY ARRIVE AT LAVRION, GREECE.

4. FINALLY, NAIROBI SHOULD INFORM GOK THAT USG WELCOMES ITS DECISION TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO DISEMBARK FOR ONWARD MOVEMENT.

5. DEPT UNDERSTANDS CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN REFTTEL B BUT DOES NOT CONCUR IN RECOMMENDATION IN REFTTEL C. THE USG HAS ACCEPTED SEVERAL THOUSAND BOAT REFUGEES AS PART OF ADMISSION PROGRAMS WHICH SINCE APRIL 1975 HAVE AUTHORIZED THE ENTRY OF 172,000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. FINAL SELECTION PROCESS IS UNDERWAY THIS MONTH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA OF THOSE WHO WILL FILL THE REMAINING AVAILABLE SPACES IN THE LATEST OF THESE PROGRAMS, A PAROLE OF 7,000 BOAT REFUGEES INAUGURATED ON JANUARY 25, 1978. THERE ARE NOW OVER 10,500 PEOPLE ON THE LITTORAL OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA; WHEN U.S. OFFICERS COMPLETE THEIR EXAMINATION OF THE APPLICANTS, OVER 3500 REFUGEES WILL REMAIN WITHOUT RESETTLEMENT OFFERS. NEW ARRIVALS REACH FIRST ASYLUM (MAINLY MALAYSIA AND THAILAND) AT A RATE OF OVER 400 A WEEK, AND THUS TO ENCOURAGE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGE SEA COUNTRIES' RECEPTIVITY TO THE BOATS, THE U.S. MUST CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS THERE. IN THE VERY RECENT PAST, BEFORE THE JANUARY PAROLE COMMENCED, SOME REFUGEES WERE REFUSED LANDING AND PEOPLE DROWNED. THE U.S. CAN GIVE GUARANTEES OF RESETTLEMENT ONLY FOR THOSE REFUGEES ON U.S. FLAG OR U.S. OWNED OCEANGOING VESSELS WHICH HAVE RESCUED THEM FROM SMALL CRAFT IN DISTRESS. WHEN ADMISSION PLACES ARE AVAILABLE, THE U.S. HAS TAKEN REFUGEES BROUGHT TO FIRST ASYLUM BY VESSELS OF OTHER REGISTRY, AMONG THEM GREEK, BUT ONLY AFTER FIRST ASYLUM HAS BEEN GRANTED. IN THE LYDIA CASE, IT WAS JUDGED THAT PLACES COULD NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM CANDIDATES BACKLOGGED IN SEA WITHOUT INCURRING UNACCEPTABLE RISK TO FIRST ASYLUM PRACTICES THERE, WHERE PROBLEM IS OF GREAT AND CONTINUING MAGNITUDE.

ON APRIL 8 THE SECRETARY REQUESTED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL GENERAL TO AUTHORIZE A CONTINUING PAROLE OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES, INCLUDING ALL BOAT REFUGEES WITHOUT OTHER OFFERS OF RESETTLEMENT, AND OVERLAND REFUGEES FROM LAOS AND CAMBODIA WHO HAVE TIES WITH THE U.S., AT A RATE OF 25,000 ANNUALLY, UNTIL THE INA IS AMENDED TO ACCOMMODATE THAT NUMBER WITHIN AN ANNUAL ADMISSION OF 50,000 REFUGEES OF

SPECIAL CONCERN TO THE U.S. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CONGRESS WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN, IF THE AG RESPONDS FAVORABLY, BEFORE THE PAROLE COULD BE IMPLEMENTED. IF AND WHEN FURTHER ACCEPTANCES OF REFUGEES POSSIBLE IN ADEQUATE NUMBERS, U.S. COULD BE MORE FORTHCOMING THAN IT NOW APPEARS TO BE IN LYDIA CASE, BUT UNTIL THAT TIME THE

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REFUGEES BEING MOVED BY UNHCR TO LAVRION, GREECE, MUST AWAIT APPROVAL BY INS FOR CONDITIONAL ENTRY. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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